

Binghamton, NY - On the 20th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) The Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC) today presented Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) with an award recognizing his perfect voting record on issues affecting persons with disabilities. Hinchey entered Congress in 1993, shortly after the ADA was signed into law in July 1990. Since that time, he has continually worked to ensure the effectiveness of ADA and build on the historic law, which has prohibited employers from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities for 20 years.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act empowers people with disabilities to live independently free of discrimination," said Hinchey. "It helps remove the misplaced stigma, which for too long suggested that a disability meant an inability, allowing persons with disabilities to pursue their dreams unencumbered by prejudice. I have always worked to ensure that this essential law is effectively enforced and updated to reflect changing needs, and I will continue to do so as long as I serve in Congress."

"Southern Tier Independence Center fought for the passage of the ADA," said Susan Ruff, Advocacy Director for STIC. "Consumers and staff members wrote letters, made calls, and travelled to Washington to get this most important bill passed. Congressman Hinchey's support of our rights and our legislation over his tenure in Congress honors the intent of the ADA, and we thank him for his continuing efforts and recognition of our civil rights."

In 2008, Hinchey voted to pass the ADA Amendments Act. This law clarified the intent of Congress to ensure that ADA covers anyone who faces unfair discrimination because of a disability. Hinchey is also a dedicated supporter of the Community Choice Act, which would increase access to community-based services and other supports for Americans with disabilities and older Americans.

STIC provides assistance and services to people with all disabilities of all ages to increase their independence in all aspects of integrated community life. ADA prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.